



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

14th December 2020

Dear Marian,

I am writing to you on the day that, under normal circumstances in any other year, we would be preparing to welcome you back to Queen Mary's to celebrate together. Our Annual Leavers' event is always a great opportunity to look back over students' time with us; to celebrate successes; to remember fondly the times that we shared and to re-kindle friendships after the first term apart at university, apprenticeships, employment and internships. It is an event that is always eagerly-anticipated for its warm glow of nostalgia and coincides with some inevitable Christmas cheer.

However, as is the pattern of 2020, we have had to cancel this opportunity to come together in person. We have all felt the impact of the global pandemic and continue to experience the effects of the last nine months in every part of our personal and working lives. It has been the most challenging period of my career in education and life in 2020 at Queen Mary's has been like no other. I have followed with dismay, the news stories of students' experiences of university lockdowns, thinking of how many former students might be caught up in those challenging conditions. I have no doubt that many of the QMGS Leavers of 2020 will have been directly or indirectly affected by the virus since leaving us and I sincerely hope that this letter finds you, your friends and families healthy and able to come together in a responsible manner over the holiday period.

I wrote to you on Thursday 19 March 2020, as we prepared for the mandatory closure of all schools on the following day. In that letter, I wrote of my pride in our community and my hopes for the future and include those words here again, nine months later. They still hold true:

At Queen Mary's, we have always strived to embed in all students a sense of community; that we can achieve great things when we work together. It is cruel that, at the very moment we need to draw upon that Marian spirit, we are forced to spend an indefinite time apart. You will undoubtedly miss your friends, teachers and support staff. Staff will miss you too. We rely upon each other for challenge, humour and routine.

Society needs people like you: intelligent, generous and innovative individuals that can act in support of others beyond the Queen Mary's community. I am proud of all of you and I urge you to look after yourselves, your families and friends and everyone else around you. You have a hugely important role to play as we face the challenges ahead.

In that spirit of community and pride, we would like to hold a virtual Leavers' event for your cohort in January 2021. It will be an opportunity to share memories, award prizes and to catch-up after some time apart. We intend to record for posterity some speeches, conduct a prize-giving event and put together a leavers' video in place of a physical event. Our intention is to make it available to you and your parents by the end of January 2021. We have contacted some members of your Year Group to start the process of gathering together pictures and video clips and they will no doubt be in touch to ask for your contributions. We will also contact you as soon as possible in the new year, if you are a prize-winner. If you would like to share any memories with us in advance of the event, please send them to rj-matley@qmg.s.walsall.sch.uk

I wish you all a peaceful and healthy holiday and look forward to re-connecting with you in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Langton
Headteacher